REVIEW OF COMMUNITY TRAFFIC SAFETY PROGRAMS

There are currently more than 330 Community Traffic Safety Programs (CTSPs) providing service to about 100,000,000 people or 40 percent of the nation's population. The role of a CTSP is to coordinate a multi-agency, public, and private response to a complex highway safety problem. In 1991, The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) sponsored an examination and review of CTSPs nationwide, focusing on their origins and structure, leadership and management styles, and their program requirements for countermeasure products. The overall purpose of this study was to describe the current status of the evolutionary CTSP process, what makes them succeed, and what makes them fail.

The project, conducted by the Preusser Research Group, Inc., collected information from NHTSA Headquarters specialists and Regional Offices, State Offices of Highway Safety, and 251 of the identified CTSP programs. The primary data collection procedure was an informal topical discussion done either face to face or by telephone. Interviews were often supplemented by sample materials or documents provided by the interviewees. Site visits were made to 12 CTSPs while an additional 239 CTSPs were contacted by telephone. Some study findings are:

Jurisdiction
   Most CTSPs are county (56%), multi-county (11%), or regional (4%) organizations. Some cover cities or towns (22%); others cover cities or towns plus surrounding areas (6%).

Population
   About one third serve communities with less than 50,000 people; one third serve 50-200,000; one third serve more than 200,000.

Home
   Most CTSPs are housed in a public sector organization such as Police (29%), Health (23%), Education (7%), Public Works (4%), or the Courts (4%). Some are in other governmental offices (21%), including the Mayor's Office, or are an independent public or private agency (12%).

Task Force
   Most have an advisory committee or task force whose members come from several public agencies plus the private sector (55%). Some have a less representative Task Force (28%); and a few have no Task Force (17%). Formal Task Force meetings are most often held monthly.

Coordinator
   Most CTSPs are managed by a career professional with a background in law enforcement (25%), health (18%), or education (15%). More than half of the coordinator positions are full time or nearly full time (58%).

Countermeasures
   Most CTSPs are active in occupant protection (81%), impaired driving (78%), child restraints (75%), and bicycle safety (57%). Many also deal with pedestrian safety (49%), speeding (38%), and a range of other types of police services (37%).

SUCCESSFUL CTSPs

The formula for building a successful CTSP necessarily varies across states and communities. Nonetheless, the following characteristics are associated with successful CTSPs.

- Control of the CTSP resides within the community.

- Participation includes multiple public and private elements.

- For long-term success, a strong representative task force or advisory committee appears very important.

- The CTSP needs a stable position in the community hierarchy, possibly (and, sometimes preferably) as a stand-alone agency or department.

- If this stable position is within some single purpose agency, such as Police or Health, it is important that the CTSP not become totally identified with the host agency's mission.

- The CTSP Coordinator is critical to CTSP success. Coordinator technical skills are less important than marketing, organization, management, and administration within, most typically, a public sector environment.

- CTSPs seem to work best in naturally defined communities ranging in size from about 50,000 to more than 500,000. In communities of less than 50,000, it may be difficult to develop enough people and resources to support CTSP activity. Communities larger than 500,000 often already have viable single issue organizations

for child restraints, bicycle safety, etc. Successful comprehensive CTSPs in these large communities are rare and organizationally complex.

- CTSPs may not be appropriate in all cases. Other state initiatives may better serve specific purposes or local conditions.

- Extremes should be avoided. For example, a small number of high profile, model CTSPs would never be practical on statewide basis; or an attempt to start a CTSP in every community at once.

Review and Analysis of Community Traffic Safety Programs (**Vol. I** Technical Report, **Volume II** Appendices) and a **Summary** document are available. Volume I provides an introduction, methodology, results, and discussion for the overall study. Volume II contains case studies of 12 exemplary CTSPs, coordinator comments and selected CTSP materials, and data tabulations of CTSP characteristics by NHTSA Regional Offices. The Summary document is a seven-page review of the study's major findings.

For copies of these documents or for additional information write to: Alfred Farina, Ph.D., Office of Program Development and Evaluation, NHTSA, NTS-32, Room 6240, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590, or send a fax to (202) 366-7096.

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